



OCTOBER 2016

“Tremendous Results” in a Single Year

CASE STUDY

SCHOOL TURNAROUND

By Learning Sciences International

School grade change in the Glades

School	Percent Black	Percent Hispanic	Percent Free or Reduced Lunch	FY14 Grade	FY 15 Grade	FY 16 Grade	Change
Belle Glades ES	61%	35%	96%	D	F	C*	↑
Glade View ES	92%	4%	99%	D	D	C	↑
Glades Central HS	62%	36%	94%	D	C	C	→
Gove ES	22%	73%	96%	C	D	D	→
Canal Point ES	70%	27%	99%	D	F	C*	↑
Lake Shore MS	65%	32%	98%	F	F	C*	↑
Pahokee ES	64%	34%	97%	C	D	C	↑
Pahokee MS/HS	56%	41%	95%	D	C	C	→
Pioneer Park ES	60%	39%	99%	F	D	C	↑
Rosenwald ES	73%	25%	99%	C	D	B*	↑

*indicates an increase of 2 letter grades

A Permanent Path to Success in One Year

Ten struggling schools in a rural part of Florida known locally as the Glades did what few would consider possible: they made remarkable, sustainable achievement gains in just one school year. The challenges were immense. Four schools had received “D” grades in the district’s accountability system and three had “Fs.” Two were designated as priority schools. The schools had some of the lowest state test scores in Palm Beach County in 2015—many in the bottom 10-20% for math and English.

They partnered with Learning Sciences International on an Intensive Supports initiative to improve instructional skills, coaching, and feedback so teachers could deliver the high quality, Tier 1 instruction students need to master rigorous standards.

Best Year-to-Year Performance Since the 1999 Inception of School Grades

Glades teachers made amazing gains. In a single year, their combined value-added measures (VAM) scores increased from -.074 to .115. And student progress was nothing short of astounding:

- 10 Glades schools collectively advanced 11 letter grades
- 85% of elementary schools had improved by at least a letter grade
- 40% of the schools had improved by two letter grades
- Highest high school graduation gains in the district, increasing by 10.3%
- Two schools were removed from the state intervention turnaround list
- Not one school dropped a letter grade

LSI offers districts a unique opportunity to transform struggling schools into models of rigorous, standards-based instruction that other schools can observe and replicate.

“This Intensive Supports model invests in our greatest resource, which is our human capital, and it builds capacity so that success may be sustained.”

- *Glades Area Superintendent*
Dr. Matthew Shoemaker

Challenges

Schools had a history of poor academic performance

Poverty: 95% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch

Teachers were struggling with increasing classroom rigor

The Approach

Training on the Essentials for Achieving Rigor instructional model of instruction

Side-by-side leadership coaching for principals

Rigorwalks and Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) meetings to gauge progress

The Schools Are Now...

Continuing to trend upward for teacher growth and student achievement

Cultivating and maintaining a positive and powerful learning environment

Making significant gains in comparison to similar schools in the district

“Tremendous Results” in a Single Year

Ten struggling schools in rural Belle Glade, Pahokee, and South Bay, Florida (known locally as the Glades) did what few would consider possible: they made remarkable, sustainable achievement gains in just a single school year.

Glades Area Superintendent Dr. Matthew Shoemaker recognized that Glades area schools needed to improve. The schools had some of the lowest state test scores in Palm Beach County in 2015—many in the bottom 10-20% for math and English. Still, he wasn’t convinced the Glades needed to adopt “yet another program.” But in 2014, Shoemaker drove east to visit Acreage Pines Elementary, a Learning Sciences Demonstration School for Rigor. That visit was a game changer. “The initiative was yielding evidence that could be seen immediately in the classrooms,” he remembers. “I was confident the same model of treatment and support in the Glades would produce tremendous results.”

Shoemaker encouraged his principals to tour Acreage Pines, and they agreed unanimously to move forward with Intensive Implementation in the Glades.

Their challenges were immense. Four schools in the Glades area had received “D” grades in the district’s accountability system, and three had “Fs.” Two were designated as priority schools. The figures below show fourth-grade math and ELA scores for 2015, well below the state and district averages.

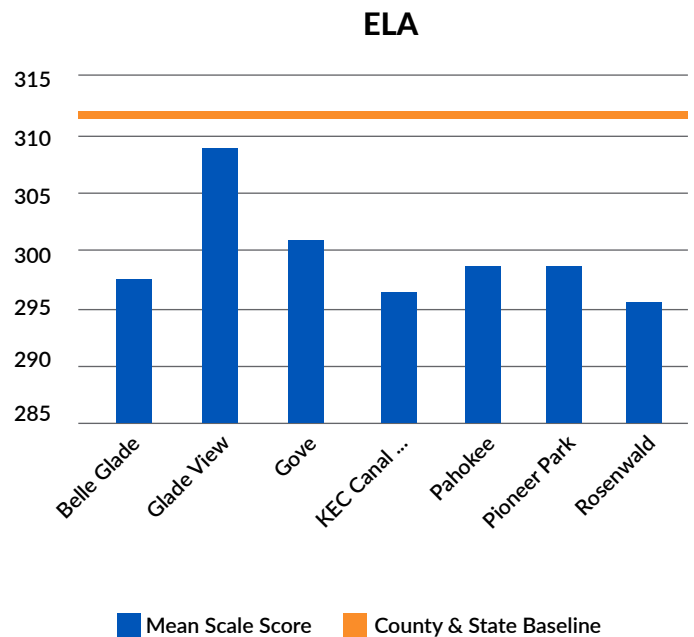
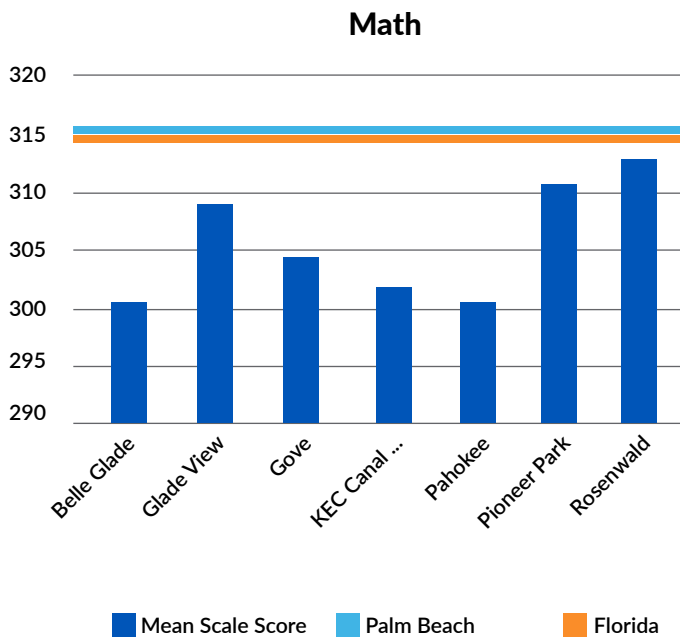
GLADES SCHOOLS DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Population:	10
Number of Schools:	349
Percent Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch:	95%
Median Household Income (2013):	\$30,359

	Glades schools	State average
Black	61%	23%
Hispanic	36%	31%
Black	9%	23%
White or Other	3%	46%

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2014-2015*

“The initiative was yielding evidence that could be seen immediately in the classrooms. I was confident the same model of treatment and support in the Glades would produce tremendous results.”



The Initiative

After a two-day kickoff for key district personnel and about 140 teachers, the schools worked collaboratively to develop their instructional and leadership skills.

- Everyone trained on the Essentials for Achieving Rigor, a model of instruction that helps educators shift to standards-based, student-centered classrooms.
- School leaders received side-by-side coaching to help them support rigorous instruction.
- The leadership team used data from benchmark tests to gauge how skills and strategies impacted student achievement.

LSI consultants helped the leadership team set and reach increasingly intensive goals throughout the year through periodic RigorWalks™.

INTENSIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The goal of Intensive Implementation is to continually improve instructional skills, coaching, and feedback so teachers can make an immediate, significant impact on learning. The Learning Sciences Intensive Supports initiative helps schools deliver the high quality, Tier 1 instruction that students need to master rigorous standards.

After each walkthrough and debriefing, the schools implemented recommendations. After a few weeks, they conducted follow-up Continuous Improvement Team (CIT) meetings to discuss their progress. Those discussions led to subsequent Rigorwalks and increasingly focused walkthroughs.

With sustained coaching and training, teachers gradually perfected their instructional practices. Their progress was clearly visible by the middle of the year, when the district’s winter diagnostics results showed Glades schools trending upward.

“The training was targeted; we were monitoring the effects of the training; we were coaching on the spot with teachers as we did instructional rounds; and we had side-by-side coaching with administrators. Taking all of that together is what works.”

– *Pahokee Middle School Principal Michael Aronson*

“After we received the state accountability grades, it was gratifying to see that our schools in the Glades weren’t just simply making gains, they were gaining against the field, and all of the hard work by our students, teachers, and principals was paying off. That was the biggest satisfaction of all.”

– Dr. Matthew Shoemaker,
Glades Area Superintendent

Results

As the year came to a close, Glades schools saw their best year-over-year performance since the inception of school grades in 1999. After just one year of Intensive Implementation...

- 10 Glades schools collectively advanced 11 letter grades
- 85% of the elementary schools had improved by at least one letter grade
- 40% of the schools had improved by two letter grades
- High schools had the highest graduation gains in the district, increasing by 10.3%
- Two schools were removed from the state intervention turnaround list
- Not one school dropped a letter grade

Glades teachers also made amazing gains. In a single year, the combined value-added measures (VAM) scores increased from -.074 to .115, demonstrating significant growth in student achievement. And a follow-up study showed that teachers receiving the treatment significantly outperformed similarly situated teachers on the state VAM.

A Partnership For Intensive Support

Learning Sciences International offers districts a unique opportunity to transform struggling schools into models of rigorous, standards-based instruction that other schools can observe and replicate.

“In the end, this Intensive Supports model invests in our greatest resource, which is our human capital, and it builds capacity so that success may be sustained—we definitely have a powerful and positive learning culture in the Glades. The outcomes speak for themselves. I’m so very proud of our students, teachers, and principals!”

– Dr. Matthew Shoemaker

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To learn more about Intensive Supports for Schools, call us at 877.411.7114 or visit us online at LearningSciences.com